

Just when you thought it was safe to go to the bookstore again, it had to happen. It was inevitable that someone would write the world's worst off-the-wall book about Easter Island. Having suffered through some of those old turkeys such as Werner Wolff's *Island of Death* (statues in the quarry were blown onto their *ahu* by volcanic activity) and the super-diffusionist *American Indians in the Pacific* by Heyerdahl, I thought we had reached the nadir. Not so. R.A. Jairazbhoy has surpassed them all. The *Ishtar* of the book world.

It seems that, according to Jairazbhoy, *everything* can be traced back to Egypt. Some Polynesian/Rapa Nui features are tracked from Egypt to Mexico to South America and *then* to Rapa Nui. Along with many valid but misinterpreted references, Jairazbhoy relies heavily on his own previous writings as proof of his theories. (For example, and to give a feel for his mind-set, one of his earlier books is titled *Ancient Egyptians and Chinese in America*).

Even the Easter Island birdman contest can be traced back to Egypt: "If one were to propose antecedents to the practice, the thought of the Egg of the Egyptian sungod would have to come to mind" (Actually, this possibility not once crossed MY mind).

The Conclusion starts off with: "If one looks simply at the ethnographic art of the Pacific islanders. . . one would never suspect that there are links in these cultures with the high civilizations of the Continents" (*No Kidding!*) And, "This is the only way of accounting for the remarkable parallels in belief with the higher civilisations. . ."

I, for one, am tired of racist theories and attitudes which denigrate the capabilities and creativity of the Polynesian peoples. Aside from a good laugh, I can't think of any reason to recommend this book. □

References

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- *Centre for South Pacific Studies Newsletter*. 1995. Vols 9, 2 and 3. University of New South Wales.
- Coulson, Alan S. 1995. Easter Island in the First World War. *Relevance: The Quarterly Journal of the Great War Society*, Vol.4(2). P.O. Box 4585, Stanford, CA 94309. Pg. 5-7.
- Diamond, Jared. 1995. Easter's End. *Discover*, Vol. 18 (8) for August, pp. 63-9.
- Federova, Irina. 1995. *Kohau Rongorongo from MAE*

(*Kunstammer*). In Russian.

The English summary states: The enigmatic *rongorongo*--unique script in Polynesia was invented by Easter Islanders before the first contacts by Europeans. This publication presents the results of deciphering, reading and translation of hieroglyphic texts on two *kohau rongorongo* tablets from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology (MAE-Kunstammer) in St. Petersburg. The study shows it to be a hieroglyphic script that reproduced the living speech and every sign is equal to the morphem or the syllable. There is a considerable number of plants' names, some toponyms (names of bays), titles of chiefs, etc. The book contains a catalog of signs with their meaning and translation.

- Ligabue, Giancarlo and Giuseppe Orefici, eds. 1994. *Rapa Nui: gli ultimi argonauti*. Erizzo Editrice, Piazzale Roma 499, 30135 Venezia, Italy. ISBN 88-7077-032-X. Hard cover, glossy paper, oversize (8½ x 11½), 362 pages, plus bibliography. 153 color plates including some great two-page spreads, numerous black and white photos, line drawings, and maps. In Italian. Price not stated.

This quality-produced volume contains papers by Davide and Viviano Domenici (I naufraghi del Pacifico), Giuseppe Orefici (Il popolamento della Polinesia e Rapa Nui; L'origine dei Rapa Nui tra storia e leggenda; and Risorse economiche e attività espressive), Gianpaolo Monti Martinengo (Geologia dell'Isola di Pasqua), Luigi Piacenza (La vegetazione dell'isola e le sue modifiche nel tempo), Andrea Drusini (Aspetti antropologici dei Rapa Nui), Giuliano Romano (Astronomia nell'Isola di Pasqua), Giancarlo Ligabue (Il sentiero dell'alba), José Miguel Ramírez (Migrazioni polinesiane), Andrzej Jacek Tomaszewski (L'industria litica), Antonio Paolillo (Applicazioni tecnologiche; Agricoltura e territorio), Georgia Lee (L'arte rupestre), and Patricia Vargas Casanova (Modelli insediativi).

- *L'Echo de Rapa Nui*. 1995. No. 31, Juillet. Brain L'Alleud, Belgique.

- Orefici Giuseppe, ed. 1995. *La Terra dei Moai: dalla polinesia all'isola di Pasqua*. Erizzo Editrice, Santa Croce 499, 30135 Venezia, Italy. Exhibition Catalog, Palazzo Reale, Milano (7 marzo-28 maggio 1995). ISBN 88-7077-034-6. Soft cover, oversize (8¼ x 11½), glossy paper, 282 pages plus bibliography. 86 color plates including some great two-page spreads, black and white photos, line drawings and maps. In Italian. Lira, 80,000.

This catalog was produced to accompany an exhibition of Easter Island artifacts, along with some other Pacific artifacts, shown this year in Milan, Italy. The exhibition was scheduled to end in May but as attendance far exceeded expectations, it was continued until mid-September. The exhibited pieces are illustrated and described (pp. 178-282); these were gathered from various sources in Chile and Italy, including several pieces from the Sebastian Englert Museum on Easter Island.

The main text of the book contains various papers about the island: Giuseppe Orefici (L'Isola di Pasqua e la Polinesia, and

Il Progetto Rapa Nui); Maurizio Biordi (Il 'Primitivismo' e l'arte oceaniana: l'Isola di Pasqua e la Polinesia); Wilhelm Solheim II (Le vie marittime dall'Asia sud-orientale all'Isola di Pasqua); Marco Biscione (La navigazione nel Pacifico); Giancarlo Ligabue (Nocchieri del Pacifico); John Flenley (Vegetazione e civiltà sull'Isola di Pasqua); Luigi Piacenza (La produzione delle fibre vegetali nell'Isola di Pasqua); Andrea Drusini (Antropologia dell'Isola di Pasqua); Andrzej Tomaszewski (L'industria litica dell'Isola di Pasqua); Giuliano Romano (L'astronomia nell'antica Rapa Nui); Georgia Lee (L'arte di Rapa Nui); Catherine and Michel Orliac (La scultura lignea dell'Isola di Pasqua); William Ayres (Architettura e figure in pietra dell'Isola di Pasqua); and Paul Bahn (C'erano cannibali sull'Isola di Pasqua?).

- *Pacific News Bulletin*. 1995. Vol. 10 (6) for June. Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, PO Box 803, Glebe NSW 2037, Australia.

- Ramírez, José Miguel. 1993. Rapanui, Artesania: Para los dioses. *Chile Artesania Tradicional*. Pp. 40-59. Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, Casilla 114D, Santiago de Chile. Hard cover, color photographs. In Spanish.

- *Revista Española del Pacífico*, No. 4/Año IV for Enero-Diciembre 1994. Asociación Española de Estudios de l Pacífico, Madrid, Spain. This issue contains a paper by Francisco Mellén (Hallazgo en el Museo de América de una azuela de piedra, recogida en Tahiti por marinos europeos a finales del siglo XVIII), plus other papers, some of which concern the voyages of Mendaña and Quirós.

- Rjabchikov, Sergei V. 1995. *The Mysteries of Easter Island* (In Russian: *Tayny ostrova Paskhi*), Vol. 4. Krasnodor: ECOINVEST. Contents of the volume: The Rapanui Script (An Experience of the Integrated Society); Astronomical Studies of the Easter Islanders; Legends, Traditions and Fairy-Tales of Easter Island; Inscription in a London *Reimiro*; on the Term "*Hanau Momoko*".

- Rjabchikov, Sergei V. 1995. The Eel and the Palm (According to the data of the Rock art and the Writing of Easter Island). *Le Bulletin du Cercle d'Etudes sur l'Ile de Pâques et la Polynésie*, Nr.3:2.

- *Rongorongo Studies*, Vol. 5(1) for 1995. Edited by Steven Roger Fischer. This issue contains: "Prehistoric Exchange between Fiji and Western Polynesia: Some evidence from Linguistics", by Paul Geraghty; "Tahitian Phonology: Missionary Perceptions, 1801-1802", by J.H. Ward; and "Asking questions in Rapanui", by Veronica Du Feu.

- Schuhmacher, W. Wilfried. 1994. Two "iron" words: Germanic vs Polynesian. *Cahiers de l'Institut de Linguistique de Louvain*. Cill 20, 3-4: 147-9.

- Schuhmacher, W. Wilfried. 1993. Place Names of Sala y

Gomez Island. *Beiträge zur Namenforschung*, Neue Folge. Band 28, Heft 1:10.

- Stephenson, Rebecca, ed. 1995. *Traditional Technological Structures and Cultures of the Pacific: Five Papers*. Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam.

This publication contains five papers that were presented at the Symposium, "Technology and Cultural Change in the Pacific", XVII Pacific Science Congress. The papers are: "On Technology and Culture Change", by Rebecca A. Stephenson; "Palauan *bai*: Traditional Versus Present Day Functions", by Faustina K. Rehuher; "*Are Kariei*: The Cook Islands' House of Entertainment", by Jon Jonassen; "Melanesia: Culture, Technology and Tradition: Before and After Western Impacts", by Robert Tonkinson; and "Times Change and So do Traditional Cultures", by Leonard Mason.

- *Tok Blong Pasifik*. 1995. A Quarterly of News and Views on the Pacific Islands. No. 49, Spring. SPPf, 415-620 View St., Victoria BC, Canada. This issue features Canada and the Pacific.

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